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MONOGRAPHS ON ARTISTS

MONOGRAPHS ON ARTISTS

EDITED, AND WRITTEN JOINTLY WITH OTHER AUTHORS,

BY

H. KNACKFUSS

IV.

VAN DYCK

BIELEFELD AND LEIPZIG
VELHAGEN & KLASING

1899

VAN DYCK

BY

H. KNACKFUSS

TRANSLATED BY

CAMPBELL DODGSON

WITH 55 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PICTURES AND DRAWINGS



BIELEFELD AND LEIPZIG
VELHAGEN & KLASING

1899

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ANTHONY VAN DYCK. Portrait of the painter by himself in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.
(From a photograph by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

ANTHONY VAN DYCK.

AMONG the numerous followers and pupils of Rubens there is none who has established such a claim to lasting renown as Anthony Van Dyck; he had not, as an artist, the power or the creative genius of his great master, but in the limited field of portrait-painting he was one of the world's greatest painters. He was born at Antwerp on the 22nd March 1599. His father Frans Van Dyck was a well-to-do merchant. According to the traditional account of the old biographers, the father and his wife, Maria Cuypers or Kupers, had come to Antwerp from Hertogenbosch, but this alleged immigration from Holland lacks all confirmation. On the contrary, the grandfather was already settled as a merchant at Antwerp, and it is to be presumed that the proud Flemish merchant-city was the old home of the family. The name of Van Dyck occurs repeatedly in the lists of the Guild of St. Luke in the course of the sixteenth century, but no family connection can at present be made out between these forgotten painters and the one who made the name so famous. There is a statement, not supported by positive proof, that Frans Van Dyck had been a glass-painter before he took to trade. It is related of Maria Cuypers that she had a great talent for the art of embroidery. A large piece of work is particularly mentioned, on which she was engaged shortly before the birth of Anthony, who was the seventh child of a family of twelve; the subject was the biblical story of Susanna, enclosed in a border of foliage. She died, after the birth of the twelfth child, on the 17th April 1607. She may, even thus early, have recognised in Anthony the inheritor of her gift for art, and one likes to think that it was she who fostered and developed in him a budding taste for the profession of a painter. Throughout his life there may be observed a certain feminine, emotional side in Van Dyck's temperament as an artist; this is the peculiar quality which differentiates him most markedly from the strongly masculine character of Rubens. Several of his brothers and sisters devoted themselves to a life of religious seclusion. In his case there seems to have been no doubt about his vocation, even from his childhood. As early as 1609 the name of Anthony Van Dyck was entered on the list of the Guild of St. Luke



Fig. 1. EARLY PORTRAIT OF THE PAINTER BY HIMSELF. In the Pinakothek, Munich.
(From a photograph by Frans Hanfstängl, Munich.)

as the pupil of Hendrik Van Balen. On the 11th February 1618 he was received into the guild as an independent master. He owed his early attainment of the rank of master not to the instruction of the worthy Van Balen alone, but in a higher degree to his practice in the studio of Rubens, to which he had been admitted after a few years of teaching from the older master. In order to participate in this privilege, for which many candidates sought in vain, the young art-student must have given considerable proofs of his ability. Even after he attained the rank of master, Anthony Van Dyck remained for two years longer with Rubens in the position of a pupil. It was a period in which the great Antwerp master was no longer able even approximately to discharge with the work of his own hand the multitude of commissions which poured in upon him, so that he was obliged to avail himself very largely of the assistance of his most skilful pupils. When he first entered the studio of Rubens, Van Dyck had to practise himself by imitating the works of great Italian painters which adorned his master's collection. Such imitations, however, were by no means exact copies; they were, rather, free adaptations of his models,



Fig. 2. EQUESTRIAN PORTRAIT OF CHARLES V. In the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.
(From a photograph by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

translations of them, so to speak, into the language current in the painting of his own day. A proof of this is Van Dyck's equestrian portrait of Charles V. in the Uffizi Gallery at Florence, which is undoubtedly the same picture as the "Emperor Charles V. after Titian" mentioned by name in the inventory of the property left by Rubens; at the first sight of this picture one might think that a Rubens, instead of a Titian, had been the original of the study (Fig. 2). The young Van Dyck acquired during his apprenticeship to Van Balen a special dexterity in painting on a small scale in grisaille. Rubens was wont, in consequence, to entrust him with the honourable task of preparing from his own large paintings the copies intended to serve for their reproduction in engraving. But Van Dyck's principal work during his course of training under Rubens consisted in transferring the master's designs on a larger scale to the canvas, and carrying them out to a greater or less extent, so that it only remained for Rubens himself to finish the picture by working upon it slightly, or more extensively, or not at all, as the case might be. We know that Rubens gave a conscientious account to the purchasers of his pictures of the extent to which pupils had collaborated in them, and lowered the price accordingly in proportion to the amount of the work which they had performed. When Rubens in a letter to Sir Dudley Carleton (of the 28th April 1618) describes a picture of Achilles among the daughters of Lycomedes as having been painted by his best pupil, one likes to suppose that by his best pupil he means Van Dyck. From the manner in which Rubens speaks of this picture one might almost conclude that the design, too, was by the pupil and only the finish of the painting by the master himself. In this way it will readily be understood that there are a number of pictures of the period towards 1620 as to which it remains entirely doubtful whether they are to be ascribed with better right to Rubens or to Van Dyck. In his large compositions of religious and profane subjects alike, Van Dyck shows himself throughout his life dependent on Rubens for invention. It is not that he is to be described as a mere imitator of Rubens; but almost all his works of that class remind us of productions by the great master which are similar or allied to them in subject. Only they lack the master's original force and brilliancy of colour; they display, instead, a tendency to softer phases of emotion and more quiet colouring.

The picture of Christ bearing the Cross, which Van Dyck painted for the Dominican church of St. Paul at Antwerp and which still remains in the same church, is the earliest work which is mentioned as having been carried out by him independently. It is not improbable that this picture was produced as early as 1617. But in 1620 we still find Van Dyck engaged in carrying out designs by his master. His name is expressly mentioned in the contract which the Jesuits of Antwerp concluded with Rubens in March 1620 for painting the vaulted ceiling of their church.

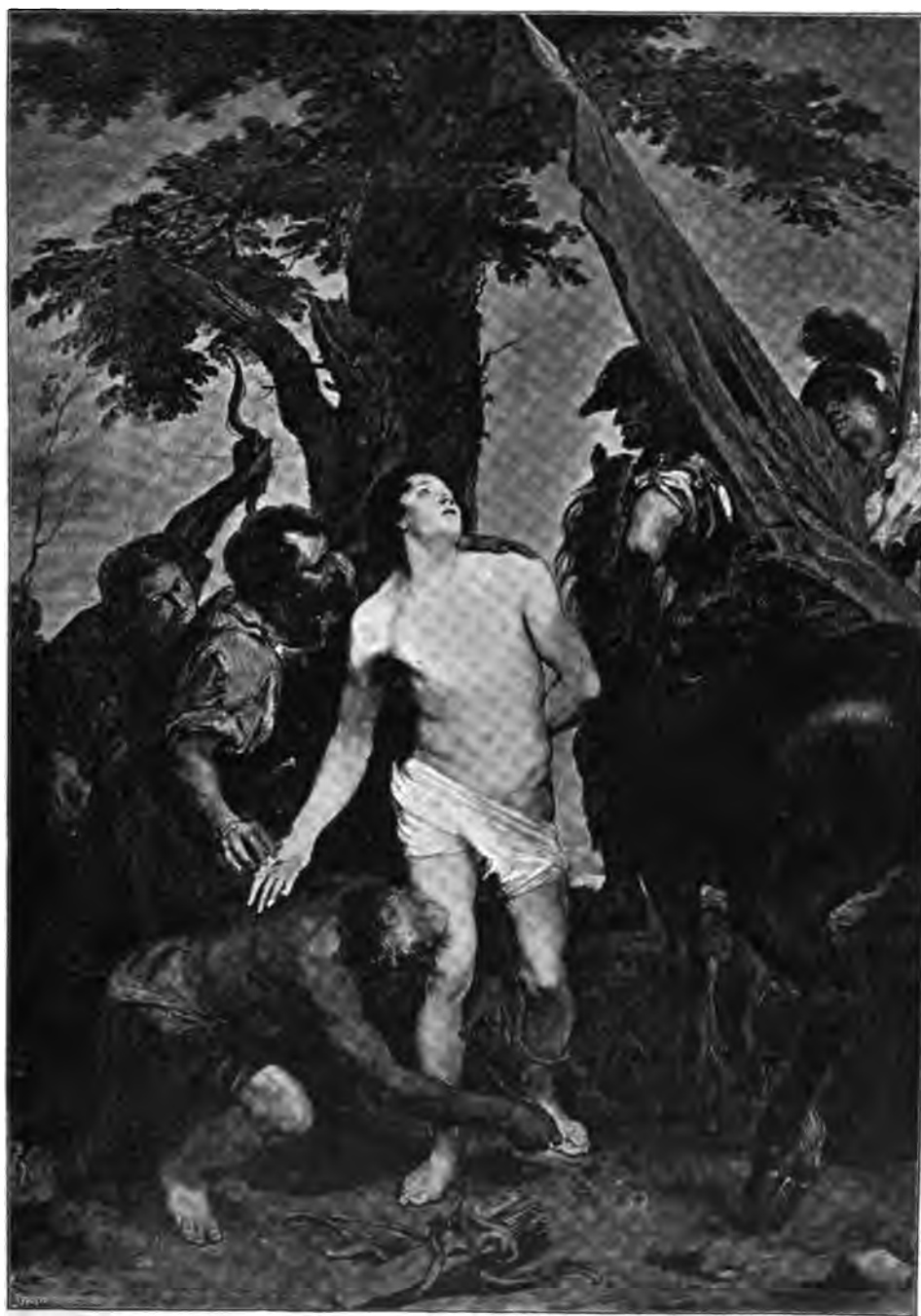


Fig. 3. ST. SEBASTIAN. In the Pinakothek Munich.
(From a photograph by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich.)

At one-and-twenty, in spite of the relation in which he still stood to Rubens as a pupil, Van Dyck was already a famous painter. It is true that he had, as yet, given scarcely any proof worth mentioning of his powers in the field of portrait-painting, in which he was to win immortal fame hereafter. Two portraits which are somewhere named as productions of the year 1618 have been lost sight of. The portrait of the young artist by himself which belongs to the Pinakothek at Munich must have been produced about 1620. The face of the youth who met with admiration so early in life is delicate and good-looking, surrounded by luxuriant, fair hair; his eyes are dark-blue, and he meets us with a pleasant smile (Fig. 1). A few other portraits are supposed, on account of the style of the painting, to belong to this period of his life. Among them are the two busts of the landscape-painter Jan Wildens, one of which is in the collection of Prince Liechtenstein at Vienna, the other in the Cassel Gallery, and also the bust of a middle-aged lady, likewise at Cassel. The last especially reminds one strikingly of the style of Rubens, from whom the fine harmony of the bright complexion and the white of the ruff has been very successfully caught. They are good portraits, but not works which would have attracted unusual attention in Antwerp at that time. But it was in the quality of a creator of large subjects, with numerous figures and splendid colouring, that Van Dyck was looked upon as a second Rubens. It was especially in pictures of sacred subjects that he seemed to compete successfully with his teacher. The admirers forgot that what they took for equality of genius was in a large manner merely the receptivity of an apt pupil. There are several capital examples of religious paintings of this period by Van Dyck in German collections. Whether they were ever intended to be erected as altarpieces, may perhaps be doubted.† It looks more as if the pupil of Rubens, in the free choice of material on which to exercise his youthful strength, had been led to such subjects by a personal preference. As a matter of fact, the appreciation of art was so great at that time in the Netherlands, that the subject of a picture was a subordinate matter to the purchaser, and he valued it purely by its artistic qualities. For the same reason one must not be surprised, on the other hand, if one meets pictures in which nothing beyond the subject is sacred and every trace of religious feeling is absent. For instance the picture by Van Dyck, of about 1620, in the Pinakothek at Munich, which represents St. Sebastian, owes its origin clearly in the first place to the young painter's desire to find an opportunity of painting a beautiful nude figure. The Saint, a powerfully built youth with a brilliant, white skin, is being bound to a tree by some muscular ruffians. Horsemen with shining arms survey the fulfilment of their orders (Fig. 3). It cannot be said, in spite of Sebastian's upward gaze, that the artist has entered profoundly into the subject of his picture as the church conceived it, by representing a hero meeting death for the sake of his faith. He was anything but profound, indeed, even on the purely human side. If we admire the saint's body, we have

done all that the artist expected of us; he does not require us to be shocked at his fate. In colouring, also, everything else in the picture is subordinate to the bright flesh-colour of the youthful form. The colouring has quite a Rubens-like range of tone, except as far as there is a suggestion,



Fig. 4. CHRIST BEING CROWNED WITH THORNS. In the Prado Gallery, Madrid.
(From a photograph by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

peculiar to Van Dyck, of a sadder and more subdued tone proceeding from the sky. The red of the flag held by one of the horsemen is as vivid and powerful as if Rubens himself had laid it on the canvas. It is a peculiarity of Van Dyck, noticeable also in many of his later pictures, that the scale is somewhat less than life. An attempt on the part of the pupil



Fig. 5. PORTRAIT OF AN ITALIAN NOBLEMAN. In the Cassel Gallery.
(From a photograph by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich.)

of Rubens to show off his ability, and the dexterity of his hand, is quite evident in the picture at Berlin of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist standing side by side, which seems on account of this juxtaposition and the absence of any action to have been meant in the first instance for an actual altarpiece. The other picture in the Berlin Museum, representing Christ being crowned with thorns, is conceived in a more seriously religious sense. The powerful forms and violent movements of the gaolers, one of whom wears bright steel armour, the colouring and the whole general effect of the picture betray the successful study of the manner of Rubens. But a personal mood finds expression through the

Rubens-like forms and colours. It is evident in the figure of the suffering Redeemer that the emotion corresponds to a true inward feeling in the painter. It seems as if Van Dyck, of whom it has been said that he was always more able to portray suffering than action, had found here a subject after his own heart. The Crowning with Thorns at Berlin is merely a repetition with slight alterations of a picture in the Prado Gallery at Madrid. The latter, as the more original work, is recognisable in a still higher degree than the former as the genuine expression of true artistic feeling; with all its richness of colouring, the sentiment is profoundly serious (Fig. 4). King Philip IV. of Spain, who acquired this picture from the property left by Rubens, considered it a sufficiently sacred picture to adorn the Escorial;

it occupied the place there assigned to it in the cloister till the Madrid Museum was organised in 1818.

Such productions, probably, revealed to the eyes of good judges of art that the young Van Dyck had personal gifts which were not to be undervalued. But what was most obvious to the great majority was not this personal quality, but, on the contrary, the very circumstance that he resembled Rubens so much in composition and painting. That was why English amateurs, especially, who could not get enough of Rubens' pictures to satisfy them, set their hopes on Van Dyck, and an effort was made to entice him over to England. In a letter which the great English patron of art, Thomas, Earl of Arundel, received from his agent, who was stopping at Antwerp, there occurs this remarkable passage: "Van Dyck lives with Rubens, and his works are beginning to be esteemed almost as highly as those of his master. He is a young man of about twenty, and the son of wealthy parents in this town, for which reason it will be difficult to induce him to leave his home, especially as he sees what a fortune Rubens is making." If, in fact, the young painter had any disinclination or hesitation to remove to England, his reluctance was bound to disappear on receiving a summons from the King of England himself. Towards the end of November 1620 "the famous pupil of Rubens", as he is called in a letter to Sir Dudley Carleton, to whom we are indebted for the first intelligence on the subject, was actually in England, and King James I. had granted him a salary of one hundred pounds a year. We do not learn



Fig. 6. PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG MAN. In the Pinakothek, Munich.
(From a photograph by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich.)



Fig. 7. GENEVIÈVE D'URFÉ, DUCHESS OF CROY. In the Pinakothek, Munich.
(From a photograph by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich.)

much about Van Dyck's occupation during this residence of his in England. On the 28th February in the following year he received leave of absence for eight months. According to the form of the passport granted to him, Van Dyck ought to have returned to England in the autumn of 1621. There is no reason to suppose that he did so, even for a short stay. He was anxious to travel as soon as possible to Italy and to complete his education by beholding the masterpieces of the previous century. Rubens, who had himself passed the best years of his youth in Italy, may also have urged this journey on his young colleague; not, indeed, in envy, for the sake of getting rid of a rival at Antwerp who threatened to become



Fig. 8. CHARLES ALEXANDER, DUKE OF CROY. In the Pinakothek, Munich.
(From a photograph by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich.)

dangerous, as ill-natured tongues were whispering. When Van Dyck set out for the South, he presented his revered master, Rubens, as a parting gift, with a picture representing the Betrayal of Christ. We learn by the inventory of the works of art which Rubens left behind him, that this picture, with several others by the hand of the celebrated pupil, adorned the master's collection till his death; when the property was sold, the picture was acquired by the King of Spain, and it is now in the Madrid Museum. It is a work of considerable dimensions, eleven and a half feet high and eight feet wide, and the figures are more than life-size. The representation of the scene embraces, at one moment, after the example



Fig. 9. CUPIDS DANCING. Drawing at Chantilly.
(From a photograph by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

of earlier masters, the kiss of Judas, the assault of the rude captors on the betrayed Saviour, and the wrath of Peter, who throws Malchus to the ground with a heavy blow from his sword. The feeling which has given rise to the picture is the same as in the Crowning with Thorns mentioned above. The colour, however, in this case does not remind us so much of Rubens. It is a dark night-piece with a strong light thrown by the red gleam of the torches; the effect is very fine. Perhaps there is not one of Van Dyck's later historical pictures in which he is so powerful and impressive as here. The importance of the gift proclaims that Van Dyck was fully conscious of the gratitude which he owed to Rubens for his instruction. It is related that the master presented him in return with one of his own Andalusian horses for the journey. Tradition tells a romantic little story of a love-affair which is said to have detained the young painter, immediately on setting out upon his journey, at the village of Saventhem, between Louvain and Brussels, and to have been the occasion of Van Dyck's executing two paintings for the church of that place. The little story has been set aside by the results of investigation; its origin may be sought in the fact that it was at Saventhem, though not till 1629, that Van Dyck proposed for the hand of Isabella Van Ophem, a daughter of the magistrate Martin Van Ophem — and was refused. The church of the place possesses

a painting of St. Martin by the hand of Van Dyck. It owes its origin, however, not to love, but to a commission given to the young artist in 1621 by Ferdinand Van Boischoot, Lord of Saventhem. The picture is one of those which are still conceived quite in the manner of Rubens. St. Martin, riding a splendid white horse, which stamps impatiently with its hoof, halts near the naked beggar, who sits on the ground. He has divided his cloak into two halves with a cut of his sword. The beggar has grasped the falling piece, to wrap himself in it, even before the hand of the giver has released the other end; the remaining half is left on the knight's shoulder. A second beggar looks up grudgingly, in the expectation of receiving a gift for himself as well. This fellow's ugly face and coarse figure, covered with rags, form an effective contrast to the aristocratic appearance of St. Martin, a noble youth with one of Van Dyck's gentle faces. In dazzling armour, wearing a cap with a feather on his curly head, the figure of the Saint stands out in brilliant colouring against the blue and silvery grey of a cloudy sky, between the dark masses of his mounted escort on one side and the corner of a building on the other. It is remarkable enough, that the beautiful picture has been suffered to remain in a village church. Towards the middle of the eighteenth century the inhabitants of the place rose up in arms against the proposed sale of this treasure of their church. In the time of Napoleon it was only possible under the protection of a detachment of troops to carry the picture away from the church and send it, as so many other precious pictures were sent, to Paris. On the restoration of the spoils in 1815 it was brought back to its own place, to the joy of the population. An attempt to steal it, which



Fig. 10. THE CRUCIFIXION.
Sketch for the altarpiece painted for the Capucin Church at Dendermonde.
In the Liechtenstein Gallery, Vienna.
(From a photograph by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)



Fig. 11. PORTRAIT OF A GENTLEMAN.
In the Pinakothek, Munich.

(From a photograph by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich.)

was made a few years later, caused special precautions to be taken for the protection of the precious work of art.

The second altarpiece which Van Dyck painted for the Church at Saventhem represented the Holy Family. It was not produced until after the artist's return from Italy, probably in the year 1629 already mentioned. It is no longer extant, for it fell a victim as early as 1673 to the rage for plunder, or destruction, of a pillaging party of Louis XIV's soldiers.

Authorities differ as to the date at which Van Dyck, who at this early age could already look back on an astonishing number of considerable works, actually started on his Italian journey. His father died on the 1st December 1622. According to the most received opinion Van Dyck was present at his father's death-bed, and quitted Antwerp a few months later, that

is to say in 1623. But according to another account he set out for Italy as early as the autumn of 1621. If we follow this last account, we find Van Dyck, accompanied by the Italian nobleman Vanni, a friend of Rubens, already at Genoa in the second half of November 1621. He found a friendly reception there from two fellow-countrymen and fellow-artists, Lucas and Cornelis de Wael. After a stay of a few weeks at Genoa, where the remembrance of Rubens was enough to secure him the most favorable treatment from the powerful noble families of the city, he took ship for Civitavecchia on the way to Rome. But the Eternal City did not detain him very long at present. His heart was set on Venice, where he wished to study the great masters of colouring on the spot. During his stay at Florence, on the way thither, he painted Lorenzo de' Medici, uncle of the Grand-Duke Ferdinand II., and received a present from him in return. At Venice he gave his utmost diligence to the study of the splendid colour in the works of the old masters, specially those of Titian. He derived unmistakable advantages from this study. We observe clearly in his works of that period, and later too, the influence of Titian's colouring on the formation of his taste. The impression made on him by the works of the great Venetian may also be recognised in the picturesque pose which he



Fig. 12. THE LAMENTATION FOR CHRIST. In the Antwerp Museum.

selected for his portraits. It is related that Van Dyck's resources ran low during his residence and study at Venice, and that he betook himself in consequence to Genoa, in order there to better his circumstances by portrait-painting, the first resource of an artist who needs to earn money, at a place where the name of his master, Rubens, was his recommendation. If that be true, necessity brought him to the sphere in which his genius really lay. The statements of various authorities are as conflicting and confused about his travels to and fro in Italy as they are about his first departure for that country. According to the most acceptable account, when Van Dyck left Venice he did not go to Genoa, but returned to Rome after a sojourn at Mantua, where he painted the Duke Ferdinand's portrait. At Rome he painted in 1622 a work which excited much admiration, the beautiful portrait, full of life and character, of the former papal nuncio at Brussels, Cardinal Bentivoglio, which is now in the collection at the Pitti Palace, Florence. As a portrait-painter he must have won the highest approval in the circles of the aristocracy by the perfect distinction of the pose which he gave to the persons whose likeness he took.

Van Dyck's own nature was one of great distinction, with most cultivated manners and a sweetness of character equal to the charm of his outward bearing. He won hearts everywhere among those who sat to him for their portraits. Among his own countrymen and fellow-artists, however, at Rome, he aroused violent opposition by his refined manners and his habit of wearing the choicest clothes and surrounding himself with a numerous equipage. For it was the style of the Flemish colony of painters at Rome to affect the most boorish behaviour and to occupy their leisure hours with loose dissipation at the tavern. Such a life was repugnant to Van Dyck's innermost nature, and he was incapable of attaching himself to the "Schilder-bent" (painters' society). This earned for him the nickname of the "Cavalier painter" (*il pittore cavalleresco*), and, worse still, attempts were made to depreciate not only his person but his abilities. We may leave it an open question whether it be true that this made his residence at Rome unpleasant for him, though he produced several remarkable works there, notably the equestrian portrait of Prince Carlo Colonna (in the gallery of pictures at the Palazzo Colonna). At any rate, in the autumn of 1623 he betook himself once more to Genoa. Here he remained for some considerable length of time, and painted a quantity of portraits among the highest classes of society in the town. It may have been before his arrival at Genoa that he painted at Turin several portraits of members of the House of Savoy, among them a stately equestrian portrait of Prince Thomas of Carignan, and several delightful portraits of children, all of which are now in the Palace at Turin. His relations with this princely house induced Van Dyck to interrupt his residence at Genoa. Duke Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy, Viceroy of Sicily, summoned him to Palermo. Van Dyck acted on his invitation in the summer of 1624 and painted the portraits of the Prince and various persons at his court. He also began a large altarpiece with a



Fig. 13. THE BURGOMASTER OF ANTWERP. In the Pinakothek, Munich.
(From a photograph by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich.)

number of Saints for the confraternity of the Rosary at Palermo. But an outbreak of the plague, of which the Viceroy himself was one of the first victims, forced him to leave the island before he had finished the works which he had begun there. He now remained at Genoa till he returned home, finding ample occupation as the portrait-painter of the world of fashion.

Thus it is at Genoa that a considerably greater number of his works is to be found than anywhere else in Italy. In the marble palaces of the Brignole-Sale, Durazzo, Balbi and Spinola families, the stately figures of the former owners, alternating with entrancing visions of childhood, arrested, as if still in life, by the hand of the painter from the north, look down from the walls on the visitor, and these likenesses throw the Italian



Fig. 14. THE WIFE OF THE BURGOMASTER OF ANTWERP. In the Pinakothek, Munich.
(From a photograph by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich.)

pictures which surround them into the shade. The portrait of Marchese Antonio Giulio di Brignole-Sale, riding slowly up, with a salutation, on a white horse with a long mane, and that of his consort, Paolina Adorno, in a rich blue velvet dress, enhanced with all the charms of youth and beauty, stepping forward with a dignified and gracious bearing, may be especially mentioned as works of eminent merit.

As compared with the portraits, all the other pictures by Van Dyck which Italy possesses are inferior in importance, as well as in numbers. For all that, there are some very remarkable productions among his religious pictures in that country. For instance, there is a Christ on the Cross with gaze upturned in agony to heaven, in the Palazzo Borghese at Rome, which



Fig. 15. WOLFGANG WILHELM OF PFALZ-NEUBURG.
Duke of Juliers and Berg. In the Pinakothek, Munich.
(From a photograph by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich.)

deeply impresses every visitor, and there is a delightful Holy Family in the Turin Gallery.

We find comparatively few works of Van Dyck's Italian period outside Italy, since most of them have remained in the places for which they were originally intended. The Cassel Gallery, however, possesses a full length portrait of an unknown Italian nobleman (Fig. 5), not inferior to the best of the Genoese portraits, and really one of his most excellent works, considered as pure painting, on account of the wonderful harmony of its colour scheme. The person represented is a slim young man standing in the marble colonnade of his palace in an easy but perfectly distinguished attitude. The face, surrounded by slightly wavy, dark-brown hair, is flushed with a brighter red than we are generally accustomed to see in southern lands; the hair has begun to grow on the

upper lip, but does not yet conceal it. His upper garments are of brown velvet shot with a reddish violet; his silk stockings are of a brownish-red colour, to match; the sleeve of the coat shows rich gold embroidery on golden-brown silk; the mantle hanging loose over the left shoulder is made of the same velvet as the doublet and hose, and is lined with a light silken stuff which repeats the reddish violet colour; the falling ends of the garter, which is of the same colour as the suit, are of a dark-toned golden material, like the rosettes on the shoes. The background consists of a column and a wall lost in shadow, of the peculiar and charming golden tone which age sometimes produces on the white Italian marble. In this whole lovely harmony of brown tones the face and carefully kept hands stand out as bright spaces, enhanced by the transparent white cambric of the cuffs and the white collar, which takes the form of the Spanish "golilla", said to have been invented by King Philip IV. A vividly contrasting tint concludes the harmony of colour, in the lustrous blueish green of a curtain which is wound about the top of the column. — In the Pinakothek at Munich we find some works painted by Van Dyck during his residence in Italy, the half-length of Filippo Spinola and the three-quarter-length of the young Marchese Mirabella; further, the excellent bust of a blond man from a northern country, who has thrown his mantle over his



Fig. 16. THE LAMENTATION FOR CHRIST. In the Pinakothek, Munich.
(From a photograph by Franz Hanfstaengl, Munich.)

shoulder like a toga in the Italian style, the speaking likeness of a young German artist in Italy, presumably the sculptor Georg Petel of Augsburg, who was staying at Genoa at the same time as Van Dyck (Fig. 6).

Views differ as much about the date of Van Dyck's return from Italy as they do about the time of the commencement of his travels. The information which appears most worthy of credence, on account of the definiteness of its statements, names the 4th July 1625 as the day of his arrival at Marseilles, whither he had proceeded from Genoa by the high-road, because the passage by sea appeared dangerous, Genoa being on hostile terms with France. On his further journey northwards he spent some time at Aix in Provence as the guest of Rubens' learned friend, Fabri de Peiresc. This account can perhaps, be reconciled with the statements made in another quarter, that — after presumably stopping in Paris — he arrived once more at Antwerp in December 1625 or January 1626.

On reaching his native town, Van Dyck had a duty to discharge towards his deceased father. The latter had expressed a wish upon his death-bed to evince his gratitude to the Dominican nuns of Antwerp, who had tended him faithfully during the last years of his life, by presenting an altarpiece to their church. In fulfilment of this pious wish, Anthony Van Dyck painted Christ on the Cross between St. Dominic and St. Catherine of Siena; at the foot of the Cross he set an angel with a lowered torch and he inscribed on a stone a prayer that the earth might rest lightly on his departed father. In 1794, when the French commissioners were searching for works of art to carry off to Paris, the painting was still in the church of the Dominican sisters, though the convent had already been suppressed. It was brought to Paris, like so many other artistic treasures from Belgium, and after they were restored in 1815 it was incorporated with the collection in the Antwerp Museum. According to tradition, Van Dyck did not carry out this memorial picture till 1629; another account, however, assigns it to 1626.

The year 1626 is also mentioned as the date of the production of the Crucifixion, an altarpiece which Van Dyck produced for the Capucin Church at Dendermonde. This picture adds to the traditional persons who stand under the Cross St. Francis of Assisi, as founder of the order to which the Capucins belong, thus removing the scene from strict historical consistency, and introducing an element of symbolism; the founder of the order kneels in fervent adoration at the foot of the Cross, between the group of the Virgin, St. John and the Magdalen, on one side, and the departing soldiery on the other. The picture, after being also carried away in the time of the French occupation, is now no longer in the Capucin Church, but in the principal church at Dendermonde. The carefully painted monochrome sketch for the picture is in the Gallery of Prince Liechtenstein at Vienna (Fig. 10).

Van Dyck probably spent some time in 1626 at Brussels, at the court of the Stadtholder, the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia. He painted her



Fig. 17. THE LAMENTATION FOR CHRIST. In the Berlin Museum.
(From a photograph by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich.)

marriage of St. Catherine of Alexandria, as a work of Van Dyck. But he had been the victim of a fraud; Van Dyck declared that the picture was not by him. Gerbier seems for the time being to have given up all hope of being able to fulfil his orders. But, at last, Van Dyck allowed himself to be won over. On the 13th March 1632 Gerbier wrote from Brussels to the King: "Van Dyck is here, and sends word that he has resolved to go to England."

The business which had taken Van Dyck to Brussels at that time was probably the painting of a likeness of the commander-in-chief of the Spanish troops in the Netherlands, Francisco de Mancada, Marquis d'Aytona. Van Dyck painted several portraits of this eminent man, who rose by degrees during his residence in Flanders from the position of ambassador to that of deputy of the Stadtholder. The stately equestrian portrait, which is now in the Louvre, and is usually praised as the finest of the master's equestrian portraits, may have been finished just at that time or shortly before. In this picture we see Mancada in full armour, but without a helmet, with the red Spanish scarf and a large, white collar over his armour, holding the field-marshal's bâton in his hand; he is turning a corner on the road, mounted on a powerful white charger, at a quick pace, so that he faces the spectator directly. Horse and rider stand out in strongly contrasted colour from a background which consists partly of a brownish tract of wooded country and partly of blue sky with yellowish clouds. The landscape in the distance is here, as always with Van Dyck, mere background; delicately modulated in tone to suit the figure, but without the least intention of taking any account of the natural relation of size between figure and landscape as it appears in reality. This is a point in which Van Dyck's equestrian portraits are sharply distinguished from those of his Spanish contemporary Velazquez, who managed to give to his portraits in the open air such a magnificent effect, and one so peculiarly satisfactory to the modern eye, precisely by his natural rendering of the harmony between figure and landscape.

At the beginning of April, 1632, Van Dyck was in London, and he was immediately taken into the service of Charles I. The King furnished the painter with the means of living in a very handsome style. He assigned to him a town-house in Blackfriars and a country-house at Eltham in Kent, and gave him a very considerable income, which was counted at first by the day and afterwards as a yearly salary, quite independently of the payments for each separate picture. A few months later, on the 5th July 1632, he conferred on him the highest mark of appreciation by making him a knight, presenting him on this occasion, as a special mark of favour, with a golden chain and his portrait set in diamonds. Van Dyck's chief task at the English court was to paint the King himself and his Queen, Henrietta Maria of France. His portraits of the English royal pair are numerous; besides those in England there are several specimens also in continental collections (Fig. 39 and 40). Van Dyck, not only an admirable

painter but a charming man, enjoyed the highest personal favour of the King from the commencement of his residence in England. When Charles I. wanted to escape from the burden of affairs of state, he would often take boat on the Thames from his Palace of Whitehall to Blackfriars, to seek refreshment in unconstrained and animated conversation with his painter.



Fig. 45. THE CRUCIFIXION. In the Pinakothek, Munich. .
(From a photograph by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich.)

There was bound to be a keen competition among the nobility who frequented the court, to show favour to the artist whom the King valued so highly.

There was, probably, never a painter anywhere who had such numerous commission for portraits as Van Dyck in England. He sometimes had to paint a number of portraits of the same people. For instance there are



Fig. 46. THE ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS. Drawing in the Albertina, Vienna.
(From a photograph by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

said to be nine portraits by his hand of the Earl of Strafford, the King's most influential adviser at that time, who went to Ireland in that year, 1632, as Lord Lieutenant, and laid his head on the block nine years later as the first victim of the incipient revolution. Among the first portraits which Van Dyck painted, next to those of the royal couple, were, probably, those of his special patrons, the enthusiastic lovers of art who had brought about his invitation to England. The Earl of Arundel, whom he painted seven times, holds the most distinguished position among these. Endymion Porter, to whom he owed his first connection with Charles I., was painted in one picture together with Van Dyck himself. This joint portrait is now in the Prado Gallery at Madrid, together with a series of portraits by Van Dyck, among which those of the painter David Rykaert and of an unknown musician may be mentioned as particularly fine works of his Antwerp period. The picture is one of great distinction. Van Dyck is dressed in black, Porter in white; blue and yellow tints, bright but yet subdued by the soft, general tone, shimmer in the sky which forms the background, along with a dark curtain. There is an effective contrast, also, in the characters of the two persons; Van Dyck is slender, elegant and vivacious, the Englishman stout and apathetic (Fig. 41). Van Dyck has here given himself a position which he was fond of in his portraits of himself, looking over his shoulder; the same view is adopted in his best-



Fig. 47. CHARLES I. In the Louvre, Paris.

known portrait, that in the Uffizi Gallery at Florence (Frontispiece), the original charm of which, however, appears to have been damaged by injudicious re-touching. The joint portrait at Madrid is described in the catalogue of the gallery as "Van Dyck and the Earl of Bristol". It is



Fig. 48. CHARLES I. AND HIS MASTER OF THE HORSE, SIR THOMAS MORTON. Buckingham Palace.
(From a photograph by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

generally called by this name in consequence, though the erroneousess of the description is proved by comparison with other likenesses of Lord Bristol and of Porter. Sir Kenelm Digby, cousin of the Earl of Bristol, was also one of the painter's closest friends. Van Dyck included his portrait among those of Amateurs in the "Iconography". His painted portrait, in which he is represented richly dressed, sitting at a table on which there stands a celestial globe, is in the collection of the Queen at Windsor Castle.

Sir Kenelm's wife, Venetia, Lady Digby, was painted by Van Dyck no less than four times within a year. In one of these pictures, which is also at Windsor, he has given an allegorical setting to the portrait. The lady sits, enveloped in the folds of idealised drapery, in the midst of a number of emblems. Behind her lies a chained monster with two faces, which is said to signify Calumny; she strokes a dove, the symbol of Innocence; a pair of cupids lie under her feet, and little angels hold a wreath over her head (Fig. 43). Van Dyck painted this picture, so the story goes, in order to protect himself against the report that his liking for the fair lady had transgressed due bounds. It appears that English ladies delighted in such allegorical portraits. Van Dyck painted several more of the same sort later on. He painted Venetia, Lady Digby, for the last time, after her early death on 1st May 1633, as a corpse with the expression of sleep, a rose with its petals fallen lying at her side.

In the spring of 1634 Van Dyck obtained leave of absence to visit the Netherlands, where he remained till some way into the following year. He must have spent the greater part of this time at Brussels. We find him at his native city of Antwerp in the autumn of 1634. His sister Susanna had the control of such property as he had left there; and to her care and keeping a natural daughter whom he had, by name Maria Theresa, was also entrusted. On the 18th October the Guild of St. Luke at Antwerp appointed him its president. At Brussels we find Van Dyck hard at work, as he ever was. Among the high personages whom he painted were Gaston d'Orléans, brother of Louis XIII., his wife Marguerite and her sister Henriette de Lorraine, Princess-Dowager of Pfalzburg; also Prince Thomas of Savoy-Carignan, who governed the Spanish Netherlands after the death of the Marquis d'Aytona till the arrival of Philip IV.'s brother, the Cardinal-Infant Don Ferdinand. He painted the Prince of Carignan several times; one of these pictures is now in the Berlin Museum. The Cardinal-Infant had hardly entered Brussels before Van Dyck received an order for his portrait too. This portrait is now in the Prado Gallery at Madrid; it shows the Infant at half-length, in the gala-dress which he wore at his solemn entry into Brussels on the 4th November 1634 (Fig. 42). When the town of Antwerp bestirred itself to prepare a reception of unheard-of splendour for this prince, to whom Belgium had looked forward with such joyful expectation, Van Dyck sent thither, at the request of the town, a copy of his portrait of the Cardinal-Infant "to be used in the triumphal arches and in the shows". But when they proceeded to ask him for a portrait of the Infanta Isabella for the same purpose, the artist, spoilt by the English prices, set his demands so high that his native town was compelled to break off the transaction.

According to the statement of an historian of the Netherlands, the portrait-group already mentioned, in which Van Dyck painted the municipal authorities of Brussels, to the number of three-and-twenty figures, is also said to have been produced in the year 1634.

Van Dyck produced another of his most masterly portraits at the same time—that of the Fiscal Advocate to the municipality and Pensioner of the town of Brussels, Justus van Meerstraeten. This half-length portrait belongs to the Cassel Gallery. The elderly but still vigorous and resolute-looking



FIG. 49. THE CHILDREN OF CHARLES I.: MARY, JAMES, CHARLES, ELIZABETH AND ANNE. In the Berlin Gallery.
(From a photograph by Franz Hanfängl, Munich.)

man stands in official costume of black silk by the side of a table on which are several large books and an antique bust; he holds in his hand a volume of the *Corpus Juris*. The tone of this picture is wonderfully clear and light; the black drapery stands out distinctly from the brown shadow of the wall in the background; the brownish-white tint of the leather bindings and of the bust on the green table-cloth, and in the opposite corner of the picture

a cool glimpse of cloudy sky, complete the exquisite harmony of colour. The portrait of Justus van Meerstraeten's wife, Isabella van Assche, a pretty and engaging brunette, which must also have been painted about the same time at Brussels, is likewise in the Cassel Gallery.

A preference for a cool tone, in which black is the basis underlying all the colour, may be taken as characteristic of Van Dyck's later period, in contrast to the scheme formed on a warm dark-brown in his earlier works. On this principle, a few religious pictures also pass for works which may have been produced at the period of this temporary sojourn in the Netherlands. Two pictures in the Pinakothek at Munich are among the number; a Crucifixion and a Lamentation for the Sacred Body, new treatment of the same two subjects which had served him so frequently in earlier times. The picture of the Crucifixion, one third of the size of life, shows the Saviour after life has passed away. The Cross rises up in front of a dark, blackish-grey sky. We see, indistinctly in the darkness, the crowd of people going away. The dead Lord upon the Cross, whose head has fallen forward, alone remains on the scene; a bright light, focussed especially on the upper part of his body, shows him plainly. The wind plays with the scroll on the cross and with the loose end of the loin-cloth (Fig. 45). In the Lamentation over the Body of Christ, the colour is meant, perhaps, even more distinctly to express pain and grief, than in any earlier treatment of this subject. The dark wall of rock forms the only background to the three figures who are occupied with the Dead. The difficulty of managing a body, which has not yet become rigid in death, is strongly brought out. The head of Christ has fallen with his face on his mother's lap, the neck being bent as far as it is possible for it to go. The Virgin looks up towards heaven with a look of questioning grief; the Magdalen wrings her hands and looks down at the Departed; St. John bursts out sobbing (Fig. 44).

The date of another altarpiece which has remained in the place for which it was originally intended can be fixed with something like certainty at about 1634—1635. This is the Nativity of Christ which Van Dyck painted for the Church of Our Lady at Dendermonde, the same church in which the Crucifixion which Van Dyck painted for the Capucin Church in the same town is now also hung. The date is determined by the fact that in the old account-books preserved in the church the payment of 500 florins to Anthony Van Dyck for painting the altarpiece, the "Holy Night", is set down among the expenses for 1635. This picture, in which Mary is represented sitting under the walls of the stable and showing the Infant Jesus to the shepherds as they enter hastily and kneel down, while child-angels hovering in the air sing the "Gloria in excelsis", owes its peculiar fame to the light and delicate harmony of colour and the delightful figures of children. The graceful drawing in the Albertina at Vienna, which shows a similar composition for the same subject, may be regarded as a preliminary study for the picture (Fig. 46).

This is, perhaps, the last definite historical picture by Van Dyck to be found, for what little he painted afterwards in the way of religious or mythological subjects was only of subordinate importance. Sir Kenelm Digby is mentioned as having ordered a number of pictures of religious subjects, while Charles I. commissioned the painter to produce various mythological compositions.

In all probability it was only in the year 1635 that Van Dyck returned to England. Charles I. had himself and his family painted over and over again by the master. The most celebrated of the portraits of the King is that in the Louvre which displays him in riding costume, standing at the edge of a wood, as if he had just dismounted from the hunter, impatiently pawing the ground, which a groom holds behind him. It is a splendid piece of colouring. The King, in a white satin jacket, red hose and light-yellow leather jack-boots, with a wide-brimmed black hat on his long, brown hair, stands out against a piece of wooded country, sloping away to the sea-coast, with a distant view of the sea and a sunny sky with white



Fig. 50. THE CHILDREN OF CHARLES I.: CHARLES, PRINCE OF WALES; JAMES, DUKE OF YORK; PRINCESS MARY.
In the Dresden Gallery.

(From a photograph by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

clouds. The horse, a grey, is relieved effectively by the deep brownish-green of the forest trees and the dull red of the groom's dress. By the side of the groom, and partly hidden by his figure, we also perceive a page, who carries the King's short cloak of light silk (Fig. 47). A number of stately equestrian portraits show the King in armour, but bare-headed, with a master of the horse by his side, who carries his gilt helmet for him. Then he appears, in full face, riding through a gateway which looks like a triumphal arch, in a majestic picture at Windsor. We see him in profile in a small picture at Buckingham Palace (Fig. 48), which seems to be the sketch for a large picture formerly at Blenheim Palace and now in the National Gallery. Here the King rides a cream-coloured horse; in the Windsor picture it is a grey. In another picture, also at Windsor, the King is represented in his royal robes of ceremony. Another portrait in the same collection shows him as the head of a family group, with the Queen and their two sons.

The various groups in which Van Dyck painted the King's children are among the most charming things which the master produced during his residence in England. Whereas many other pictures of his later period betray the haste with which they were painted, the children are always treated by the artist as if he loved his work. In the case of the portraits of the children the date can be more nearly determined, since the age of the persons represented is a certain indication to go by, whereas, in the case of the likenesses of the King and Queen, there is usually nothing to suggest in what year they were painted. Of these groups of children there are quite a number. The gem of them all is in the Turin Gallery. It must have been painted in 1635, soon after the master's return to England. It shows the three eldest children of the King, the Prince of Wales (born in 1630, afterwards Charles II.), the Princess Mary (born in 1631, afterwards the wife of William II., Prince of Orange), and the Duke of York (born in 1633, afterwards King James II.) The latter can just stand alone, and even the Prince of Wales still wears a frock and a little cap. The three children stand side by side without any closer connection; the eldest, who already displays a certain gravity of demeanour, strokes the head of a long-haired dog. The charm of the picture lies partly in the delightful treatment of childhood and still more in its marvellous colour. We see roses in bloom in the background, and the pretty children are like flowers themselves in their gay silk dresses. We see the same three children about a year older in the exquisite picture at Dresden (Fig. 50). Here the three brightly coloured figures—the Prince of Wales already dressed as a boy—stand in front of a quiet, dark background. Two pretty white and tan spaniels of the breed which were such favourites at the court of Charles I. that they still go by his name, sit near the children; in the place where the animals are introduced they are of importance both in the combined effect of the colour and in the lineal structure of the composition. A group resembling the Dresden picture, painted a little later again, is at Windsor

Castle. The group is larger and the composition more elaborate in the picture of 1637 at Windsor, of which the Berlin Gallery contains a repetition painted in the same year (Fig. 49). In addition to the three elder children, the little princesses Elizabeth and Anne are introduced. A glimpse of the park and the bright sky, afforded by the drawing aside of a dark-green curtain, and a table with a dull-red cover on which fruits and shining vessels are laid, bring a lively play of colour into the background, which harmonizes



Fig. 51. LADY DIANA CECIL, COUNTESS OF OXFORD. In the Prado Gallery, Madrid.
(From a photograph by Braun, Clement & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

with the charm of the children's gay frocks and their rosy faces. Princess Mary is dressed all in white; the Duke of York, who still wears a frock and cap, has a little jacket of red shot with yellow over his white frock; the Prince of Wales, who stands in the middle of the picture as the most important figure, wears a light-red suit with slashed sleeves lined with white, and white shoes with red rosettes; his left hand rests on the head of a powerful mastiff, whose yellow coat is a splendid complement to the strongest colours in the picture, the red worn by the Prince of Wales and a light blue, which is the colour of the frock of Princess Elizabeth. The youngest

princess, supported by her little sister, sits in her baby-clothes on a chair, on which a pale red cloth lies across a dark velvet cushion; in front of the two little ones lies a tiny white and tan spaniel.

We can form some idea of the occupation given Van Dyck by the King, when we learn that an extant account, settled by order of Charles I. in 1638, after he had discounted considerably some of the prices set by the artist on his work, enumerates twenty-three pictures then awaiting payment, which included twelve portraits of the Queen and five of the King. And, besides these, Van Dyck painted an incredibly large number of portraits of other people. He was overloaded with commissions from the whole aristocracy of the English court, and he managed to satisfy all his patrons with masterly pictures. We find admirable portraits of ladies, especially, among the works of his latest period. The half-length of the Countess of Oxford, a lively-looking brunette, whose warm complexion is thrown into most effective relief by the black silk dress and the background composed of a greyish-brown mass of rock and a portion of the blue sky with white clouds (Fig. 51), and the stately whole-length of the Princesse de Cantecroix, in a handsome gala-dress, who steps on the threshold of her house, where a little lap-dog welcomes her (Fig. 52), may serve as characteristic examples.

There are said to be altogether about three hundred portraits by Van Dyck in England, the majority of which are in the mansions of the nobility, still in the possession of descendants of the persons represented.

Van Dyck could not possibly have contrived to grapple with the multitude of orders which reached him, had he not employed several gifted pupils whom he trained as assistants: Jan de Reyn of Dunkirk, whom he had brought with him from Antwerp, David Beeck of Arnhem whose rapidity in painting excited amazement, and James Gandy, who was also highly esteemed as an independent portrait-painter and lived afterwards in Ireland, are specially mentioned. The master must have called in the help of pupils extensively in the numerous cases in which replicas were required; that was frequently done, for the sake of making valuable presents at weddings or other festal occasions among the circle of relatives and acquaintances of the person in question. We have detailed information about Van Dyck's method of working, from quite a trustworthy source; it rests on the declaration of a man who stood in close personal relations with the artist. The writer De Piles relates in his treatise on painting, which appeared at Paris at 1708: "the celebrated Jabach (of Cologne), well known to all lovers of the fine arts, who was on friendly terms with Van Dyck and had had his portrait painted by him three times, informed me that he spoke to that painter one day of the short time which the latter spent on his portraits, whereupon the painter replied that at first he used to exert himself severely, and take very great pains with his portraits for the sake of his reputation and in order to learn to do them quickly, at a time when he was working for his daily bread. Then he gave me the following particulars of Van Dyck's customary procedure. He appointed a day and



Fig. 52. BÉATRIX DE CUSANCE, PRINCESSE DE CANTECROIX.
In the Royal Collection, Windsor Castle.

(From a photograph by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach and Paris.)

hour for the person whom he was to paint, and did not work longer than one hour at a time on each portrait, whether at the commencement or at the finish; as soon as his clock pointed to the hour, he rose and made a reverence to his sitter, as much to say that this was enough for the day, and then he made an appointment for another day and hour; thereupon his serving-man would come to clean his brushes and prepare a fresh

palette, while he received another person who had made an appointment for this hour. Thus he worked at several portraits on the same day, and worked, too, with an astonishing rapidity. After he had just begun a portrait and grounded it, he made the sitter assume the pose which he had determined for himself beforehand, and made a sketch of the figure and costume on grey paper with black and white chalk, arranging the drapery in a grand style and with the finest taste. He gave this drawing afterwards to skilled assistants whom he kept employed, in order to transfer it to the picture, working from the actual clothes, which were sent to Van Dyck at his request for this purpose. When the pupils had carried out the drapery, as far as they could, from nature, he went over it lightly and introduced into it by his skill in a very short time the art and truth which we admire. For the hands he employed hired models of both sexes." It is clear that this account refers to the later period of this busy portrait-painter. In his earlier portraits Van Dyck unmistakably carried out not only the nude, but also the drapery and all accessories with his own hand entirely. As for the hands, it is true that they show, even in the early portraits at Genoa, a uniform delicacy which does not correspond with the speaking and individual characterisation of the faces. Still there are many portraits by him, too, in which the character of the hands is just as ably and closely studied as that of the face; this is always the case, in particular, with the portraits of artists.

We are further informed that Van Dyck was fond, at the end of his day's work, of inviting the persons whom he was painting to dine with him, and that at these repasts the style of entertainment was no less sumptuous than that adopted by the highest classes of society in England. After his work was done, Van Dyck lived like a prince. His earnings were immense, and he spent them freely. It is said that once Charles I., while sitting for his portrait, was talking to the Earl of Arundel about the bad state of his finances, and addressed to the painter incidentally the playful question whether he, too, knew what it meant to be short of money. "Yes, Sire," Van Dyck is said to have answered, "when one keeps an open table for his friends and an open purse for his mistresses, he soon reaches the bottom of his money-chest."

This saying touches on the greatest weakness of the great painter. Van Dyck had too susceptible a heart and too keen a sense for feminine charm and beauty. It seems that the king himself conceived the idea of putting a stop to the artist's unrestrained profligacy by a suitable marriage. An opportunity at once offered itself of providing a brilliant match for one of the Queen's maids of honour, a young lady of a good old family, but of no fortune. The name of this girl was Mary Ruthven. Her father Patrick Ruthven, son of William Ruthven, Earl of Gowrie, had been suspected of high treason in the previous reign, and had lain for a long time in the Tower; he had lost the remains of his family property in this way, and his daughter, in spite of her near relationship with some of the highest

families in the land, even with the Stuarts themselves, was compelled, in order to live as became her rank, to accept the help which the royal household offered her. It is possible, however, that Van Dyck was attracted not so much by the intervention of others as by a true liking for the lady, who was pretty and still quite young. He married Mary Ruthven in 1639. It goes without saying, that he immortalised his wife repeatedly in painting. A threequarter length in the Pinakothek at Munich shows us the pleasant aspect of the young wife, whose fine and regular face is strikingly pale (Fig. 54). In this picture she holds a violoncello. In her love for music she agreed with her husband, who did not omit musical entertainments for the brilliant company which he loved to gather round him in his house.

It is thought that a certain decline of artistic power is observable in the portraits which Van Dyck painted after 1635. It is certainly possible that in many of them the great haste of production and the collaboration of pupils are all too visible. In any case, however, the master preserved to the end one peculiarity of his portraits, which he had displayed even in those painted at Genoa in his youth; that is, the incomparable nobility of treatment which appears in every face and every form and in the whole character of the pictures. It is impossible that all the persons of rank whom Van Dyck painted should have possessed that distinction of character and that aristocratic grace which makes them appear so attractive in their likenesses.

But Van Dyck saw in the souls of his models, as reflected in their features, nothing but the winning qualities of a noble nature; not only everything common, but everything which bore the stamp of passion, lay



Fig. 53. ENGLISH HERALDS. Drawing in the Albertina, Vienna.
From a photograph by Braun, Clément & Co.,
Dornach and Paris.)

outside the range of his artistic vision. Thus he filled the figures which he portrayed with an aristocratic and harmonious tranquillity of soul, of which the noble and peaceful beauty of the colouring—a marvel of art in itself—seems merely the natural expression in painting. These figures stand before us in so strikingly natural and almost lifelike a shape, that the qualities aforesaid tell all the more effectively in the result. There is a quite peculiar charm in a portrait by Van Dyck. It always gives one the feeling of being in very good society, and makes one think that it would have been a treat to converse with the original of the portrait. That is why one is never tired of looking at such a portrait, even though the person represented may be entirely unknown.

It is curious—though there are many parallel cases—that Van Dyck never felt permanently satisfied with his occupation as a portrait-painter, by which he earned such imperishable fame, but fancied that he saw his true vocation, spoilt by the force of circumstances, in the production of grand historical pictures. The more completely the multitude of portraits to be painted occupied his time, the more intensely did he crave to be doing something great in another sphere of work. He tried to obtain Charles I.'s consent to an enterprise which would have given him an ample opportunity of satisfying this craving. His proposal was, to cover the walls of the great banqueting-hall in Whitehall, the ceiling of which had been decorated with paintings by Rubens in 1635, with subjects from the history of the Order of the Garter. Van Dyck is said to have expressed his opinion that it would look best if his compositions appeared on the walls, not as paintings, but in the form of tapestry, which would be turned out by the tapestry-weaving establishment at Mortlake. The king was not disinclined to the project. Some sketches and studies bearing on it were actually produced, among them the admirable drawing of two heralds of the kingdom of Great Britain in the Albertina (Fig. 53). But the enterprise was wrecked by the difficulty of the expense; though we may regard as exaggerated the statement of one writer, that Van Dyck estimated the cost of this wall-decoration at £ 80,000, which according to the value of money at that time would represent something like £ 200,000 at the present day, at any rate, the king was no longer in a position to spend large sums on artistic undertakings. In 1640 began the series of embarrassments and hardships for Charles I. which were not to end till he mounted the scaffold.

After Van Dyck had abandoned the hope of being able to carry out a great monumental work in painting for the King of England, he wished to try his luck at the French court. He left London with his young wife in September 1640 and went first to Holland, then to Antwerp and thence to Paris. He hoped that he might be able to succeed, by putting in a personal appearance, in obtaining the commission for the decoration of the great gallery in the Louvre with historical pictures, which was contemplated by Louis XIII. But here, too, his expectations were disappointed. Louis XIII.



Fig. 54. MARY RUTHVEN, wife of the artist. In the Pinakothek, Munich.
(From a photograph by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich.)

had already assigned this task to Nicolas Poussin, who, however, was obliged subsequently to resign it to another artist, Simon Vouet, the favourite of the queen.

In Paris Van Dyck fell ill. On the 16th November 1641 he asked, in a letter which is still preserved in an English collection of autographs, for a pass to be made out for himself and five servants, his travelling-carriage and four maids. As he became worse from day to day, he wrote that he was longing with all his heart for his English home; if he recovered his health, as he hoped, he would return to Paris, to undertake the commissions which Cardinal Richelieu proposed to give him.

His wife, who was expecting her confinement, must have returned to England already. Shortly after Van Dyck's arrival at his house in Blackfriars, on the 1st December, she gave birth to a daughter.

Van Dyck's condition had meanwhile become hopeless. On the 4th December he was sensible of the approach of death, and made his will. Five days later, on the 9th December 1641, he passed away. The story goes that Charles I. had promised his own physician a fee of £300,

if he could succeed in preserving Van Dyck's life. The painter was honoured in death by the burial of his remains in the choir of St. Paul's Cathedral. The burning of the church in 1655 destroyed his tomb.

In spite of the great expense at which he had lived, Van Dyck left a very considerable fortune, which was divided between his widow and his nearest relations living at Antwerp.

The young widow subsequently contracted a second marriage with a baronet, Sir Richard Pryse, of Gogerddan in Wales.

Van Dyck's daughter, Justiniana, the only child of his marriage, married Sir John Stepney of Pendergast. Charles II. granted her a pension of £200 a year, by way of compensation for the arrears of payment due to her father from Charles I. The descendants of Van Dyck in the Stepney family continued till 1825.

The Dutch painter, Philip Van Dyk, who, though no great artist, had an extensive practice as a portrait-painter in the first half of the eighteenth century, was not related to the family of his great namesake.



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